

# SECTION 1

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Three kinds of demographic indicators were selected for inclusion in this report:

- A description of the California population in 1990 in terms of age, gender, and race/ethnicity, plus historical trends in these population characteristics;
- Social and economic characteristics of women in California in 1990, including levels of poverty and education, language usage, marital status, and number of children;
- An evaluation of the association between poverty and these social characteristics among women in 1990.

The primary data source for this section was the US Census. Estimates of the total population characteristics and trends are based on the US Census files for 1970, 1980, and 1990, provided by the California Department of Finance. The five percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) version of the 1990 US Census was used for the studies of social and economic factors.

Please refer to Appendix A for the frequencies and rates that were used in preparation of the charts presented in this section.

### Definitions Used in This Section

Unless defined otherwise, throughout this section the term "childbearing age" refers to ages 18-44 years, "middle age" refers to ages 45-64 years and "senior" refers to ages 65+ years. Poverty is defined as having a family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

### The California Population: Size, Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity

As shown in Table 1.1, the total California population grew by 49.6 percent, from approximately 20 million in 1970 to approximately 30 million in 1990. During that same period, the female population grew from 10 million to 15 million.

Females made up 49.9 percent of the total population in 1990. Less than half (48.7 percent) of the population under age 45 years was female, while almost three fourths (71.0 percent) of adults age 45 and over were female (Table 1.1). The age when females became the majority of the population shifted upward during this period, from age 41 years in 1970 to age 45 years in 1990 (Data not shown).

### Age Distribution of the California Population

The age distribution of the California population in 1990 shows a large "bump" for persons aged 35-45 years, reflecting the post-World War II "baby boom" plus in-migration of young adults (Figure 1.1). This "bump" was clear among whites and Hispanics, but was very slight for other groups. Second, there was a "dip" in the line representing the number of adults aged 50-60 years,

reflecting the lower birth rate during the Depression of the 1930s. Third, for seniors aged 60-75 years there was a second "bump", but only among whites. A relatively large proportion of the elderly population in California was identified as white in 1990 (79 percent of females and 78 percent of males).

As shown in Figure 1.2, the "baby boom bump" has been a prominent feature of the age distribution of the California female population for a number of decades. The oldest members of this group will reach retirement age in the year 2010. From that year through 2025, there will be elevated numbers of elderly persons in the population, two thirds of whom will be women (Data not shown).

### **Race/Ethnicity of the Female Population in California, 1990**

**Total Female Population.** The details of the composition of the female population are shown in Figure 1.3. Just over half (58.1 percent) of California females in 1990 were white, a quarter (24.8 percent) were Hispanic, 10.0 percent were Asian/Other, and 7.2 percent were African American. The Asian population requires further breakdown as follows:

Among Asians, over one fourth were identified as Filipino (27.5 percent) and another quarter were identified as Chinese (25.8 percent). Southeast Asians, Japanese, Asian Indians, and Koreans each made up 10-17 percent of the Asian female population, as shown in Figure 1.4.

**Age and Race/Ethnicity.** As shown in Figure 1.5, the race/ethnic group composition of the 1990 population was different for different age groups. Whites made up 45.2 percent of the preschoolers, but 79.0 percent of the seniors. In contrast, Hispanics made up 36.7 percent of preschoolers, but only 9.9 percent of seniors. The percentage who were African American was 8.3 percent among preschoolers, decreasing to 5.0 percent among seniors. The Asian/Other group made up 9.8 percent of all age groups up to age 65 years and 6.1 percent of seniors.

### **Education Level of the Female Population of California, 1990**

The level of education among women in California has been increasing: a smaller percentage of women of childbearing age had less than a high school education (21.0 percent) compared with senior women (37.9 percent), and a higher percentage had completed a bachelor's degree or higher (20.2 percent of childbearing age women compared with 10.9 percent of seniors).

The percent of women with less than a high school education varied across race/ethnic groups as shown in Figure 1.6. The highest percent was found among Hispanics (48.7 percent of childbearing age women and 76.3 percent of seniors), followed by Native Americans (22.7 percent of childbearing age women and 52.2 percent of seniors), Asians (17.8 percent of childbearing age women and 56.6 percent of seniors), African Americans (16.2 percent of childbearing age women and 58.2 percent of seniors), and lowest among whites (9.4 percent of childbearing age women and 30.6 percent of seniors).

The percent of women who had completed a bachelor's degree also varied by age and race/ethnicity, as shown in Figure 1.7. In general, women of childbearing age were more likely to have obtained a four year degree than were middle aged women or senior women. Among women of childbearing age, Asians (32.4 percent) were most likely to have completed a four year degree, followed by whites (25.7 percent).

## **Language Spoken At Home**

About one third of all California women of childbearing age spoke a language other than English at home, compared with 28.6 percent of middle age women and 21.1 percent of seniors. This percent was highest among Asians (78.9 percent of childbearing age women, 89.5 percent of seniors) and Hispanics (77.0 percent of childbearing age women, 84.8 percent of seniors). Among whites, African Americans, and Native Americans, 6-10 percent of childbearing age women and 4-14 percent of seniors used a language other than English at home, as shown in Figure 1.8.

Women who reported little formal education were most likely to use a language other than English at home, especially among women age 65 and over. As shown in Figure 1.9, among women of childbearing age, 40.7 percent of those who had not finished high school used a language other than English at home, compared with only 11.1 percent of those who had completed a bachelor's degree. Among women ages 65 and over, 62.4 percent of those who had not finished high school used a language other than English at home, compared with only 4.2 percent of those who had completed a four year degree. Thus, a large proportion of women, particularly seniors, who had limited formal education also used English as a second language.

## **Marriage, Children, and Household Composition**

**Marriage.** In 1990, over 53.3 percent of California women of childbearing age and 65.0 percent of middle aged women were married. Among senior women, 40.1 percent were married, but a slightly larger percent (45.9 percent) were widowed.

As shown in Figure 1.10, the percent of women of childbearing age who were married ranged between 55 percent and 60 percent for Asians, Hispanics, and whites. It was slightly lower among African Americans (31.6 percent) and Native Americans (47.1 percent). Among seniors, the percent who remained married ranged from 42 percent among Asians and whites to 36 percent among Hispanics and 26-30 percent among African Americans, Native Americans, and others.

As shown in Figure 1.11, the percent of women who were separated or divorced varied widely among these race/ethnic groups. Among women of child-bearing age, the percent who were divorced or separated was 6.4 percent for Asians, 11.1 percent for Hispanics, 14.7 percent for whites, and 20 percent for African Americans and Native Americans. These percentages were higher for middle aged women in all groups, reaching 9.6 percent among Asians, compared with 36.8 percent of African Americans and 27.2 percent of Native Americans.

As shown in Figure 1.12, among seniors almost half (46 percent) were widowed, in all race/ethnic groups. This percent ranged from 45.3 percent of whites to 53.1 percent of Native Americans.

**Number of Children.** As shown in Figure 1.13, 40.7 percent of women in the childbearing ages had no children, 18.4 percent had one child, and 34.0 percent had two or three children. The percent who had four or more children was 7.5 percent overall, but reached 13 percent for Hispanic women.

**Head of the Family.** In 1990, about two thirds (64.0 percent) of all California households were

families and the remaining third were single adults and persons living in institutions. Among family households, three quarters (77.2) were headed by a married couple, 16.5 percent were headed by a single female, and 6.3 percent were headed by a single male. However, among families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, the percent headed by a couple was only 58.9 percent, while the percent headed by a single female rose to 32.6 and the percent headed by a single male rose to 8.6, as shown in Figure 1.14.

### **Income, Defined as Percentage of Federal Poverty Level**

The women most likely to be living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) were those of childbearing age (31.5 percent) and seniors (38.8 percent), compared with middle aged women (20.4 percent). As shown in Figure 1.15, the percent of childbearing age women living in poverty was higher among Hispanics (50.9 percent), African Americans, and Native Americans (both 42 percent), than among Asians (29.5 percent) and whites (21.3 percent). Thus, except for whites, between one third and one half of California women in their child bearing years had incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Among seniors, the percent of women with incomes below 200 percent FPL reached 59.5 percent for African Americans, 54.3 percent for Native Americans, 52.6 percent for Hispanics, 37.4 percent for Asians, and 35.9 percent for whites. Thus, in all race/ethnic groups at least one third of the elderly women were poor and this percent reached nearly two thirds among African Americans.

As shown in Figure 1.16, the women who were most likely to live above 500 percent of the federal poverty level were those in the mid-adult age range in all race/ethnic groups. The proportion was highest among whites (50.3 percent) and Asians (35.8 percent).

### **Employment**

As shown in Figure 1.17, there was little variation in women's employment status across race/ethnic groups. Approximately half (53.7 percent) of the women aged 16 years or older were employed in civilian work, in all race/ethnic groups and approximately two fifths (42.3 percent) were outside the labor force. The percentage who reported being unemployed was slightly higher among Hispanics (6.6 percent), African Americans (6.3 percent), and Native Americans (5.4 percent), compared with whites and Asians (about 3 percent). The percent who were in the military, while generally low, was higher among African Americans (0.7 percent) and Native Americans (0.5 percent), compared with women in other groups (0.1 percent to 0.3 percent).

Participation in the labor force varied considerably by age, as shown in Figure 1.18. As expected, most women aged 65+ years were outside the labor force (90.6 percent), although 8.8 percent claimed to be still employed. Among women of childbearing age, the percent with civilian employment (66.1 percent) was higher than among women ages 54-64 years (57.4 percent). The percent of women who were outside the labor force was higher among middle aged women (39.9 percent) than among women of childbearing age (28.9 percent). Thus, women in the age group most likely to have children at home were likely to be employed outside the home.

California women had a 50-50 chance of being in the labor force, even if they were married or had preschool age children. As shown in Table 1.2, the majority of women in the childbearing and middle age groups were employed, even among those who were married or who had young

children at home. Over half of women with preschool aged children (52.4 percent of childbearing and 53.6 percent of middle aged women) were employed. Two thirds of the women with school-aged children (69.7 percent of childbearing age women and 61.5 percent of middle aged women) were working. Among women who were married, 63.1 percent of those of childbearing age and 53.6 percent of middle aged women were employed. The women most likely to be working, in both age groups, were those who were separated or divorced (72.1 and 71.0 percent of childbearing and middle age women respectively).

## **Association Between Poverty and Other Demographic Indicators**

### **Education Level and Poverty.**

As shown in Figure 1.19, there was a very strong association between level of education and risk of living in poverty for women in all age groups. For example, among women of childbearing age, 61.2 percent of those with less than a high school education were poor, compared with only 12.7 of those with a bachelor's degree, almost a five-fold difference. Similarly, among middle-aged women, the percent who were poor was 41.0 percent for women with less than a high school education compared with 8.0 percent of those with bachelor's degrees (also a five-fold difference). Among seniors, there was about a three-fold difference (54.2 percent of women with less than a high school education vs. 19.1 percent of women with bachelor's degrees). Nevertheless, nearly two fifths of seniors with bachelor's degrees had incomes below the poverty level.

### **Use of a Language Other Than English at Home and Poverty**

As shown in Figure 1.20, women who spoke a language other than English at home had twice the risk of having an income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, among women of child bearing age (46.3 percent, compared with 24.2 percent of English speakers), middle aged women (31.3 percent, compared with 16.0 percent of English speakers), and seniors (46.2 percent, compared with 36.9 percent of English speakers).

### **Marital Status and Poverty**

For all age groups, widows were most likely to be poor, followed by women who were divorced or separated. As shown in Figure 1.21, married women were only half as likely to live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, compared with all other women. Among women of childbearing age, 22.8 percent of the married women were poor, compared with 40.1 percent of the never married, 43.9 percent of the separated/divorced women, and 54.7 percent of widows. Among middle aged women, 12.8 percent of the married women were poor, compared with 34.4 percent of the never married, 32.2 percent of the separated/divorced women, and 39.2 percent of widows. Among seniors, 20.8 percent of the married women were poor, compared with 46.6 percent of the never married, 50.4 percent of the separated/divorced women, and 51.4 percent of widows.

### **Head of Household and Poverty**

The percent of families with income below the federal poverty level was highest for those headed by a single female (31.0 percent), followed by those headed by a single male (17.7 percent), and those headed by a couple (7.8 percent). In contrast, the percent of families with

incomes above the "working poor" level (i.e., above 300 percent FPL) was lowest among those headed by a single female (25.5 percent) and higher for those headed by a single male (38.5 percent) or by a couple (57.0 percent), as shown in Figure 1.22.

### **Summary of Population Characteristics**

The age distribution of California women is complex. Women born during the post World War II "baby boom" have been an identifiable "bump" in the age curve for a number of decades. They reached ages 35-45 years by 1990 and will begin reaching age 65 in the year 2010.

The race/ethnic group composition of the female population is also complex. Whites and Hispanics each made up two fifths of the preschool age population, but among seniors, four fifths were white. African Americans made up 8 percent of the preschoolers and 5 percent of the seniors. Asians/Others made up 11 percent of the preschoolers and 6 percent of the seniors. The Asian population was composed of a number of distinct subgroups.

The education level of women has been improving: a larger percent of each successive birth cohort has completed high school. Among women over age 65 years at the time period covered by this report, 50-60 percent had less than a high school education (except among whites, with only 30.6 percent reporting less than a high school education).

A majority (60 percent) of women in the age range 18-64 years were married and a majority (60 percent) had at least one child. Approximately 40 percent of California women did not report living in the traditional "marriage-plus-children" family environment; in fact, only 50 percent of California households were families headed by a married couple. Women who were not married (including those who were widowed, no longer married, or never married) were twice as likely to be poor as married women. Households headed by a single female were four times more likely to live below the federal poverty level than families headed by a couple.

A majority of women with families were in the labor force: 63 percent of married women, 52 percent of mothers whose children were preschoolers and 69 percent of mothers with school aged children were working outside the home. The percent of women of childbearing age who were working was greater than the percent of middle aged women who were working.

Poverty was most prevalent among seniors (almost 40 percent), followed by women of childbearing age (30 percent). Thus, the women who were most likely to need extra resources to care for health problems were also most likely to be poor. Risk of poverty was twice as high among Hispanic, African American, and Native American women, compared with whites.

This demographic information--including age distribution, race/ethnic group membership, family composition, employment, education, and income--is provided as background about the female population in California. However, only age and race/ethnicity are routinely collected for morbidity, mortality, and hospitalization records. As a result, in the following analyses, using existing health data, only the effects of age and race/ethnicity on health status are reported.